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A radio discussion between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, Mr. E. J. Rowell, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, February 24, 1938, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 93 associated radio stations.

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KADDERLY: Thank you, Everett Mitchell-- Here we are in Washington, with your regular Thursday headliners, Ruth Van Deman and Mike Rowell, to give you the news from the Department of Agriculture on home and farm business. First, on the home side, we hear from Ruth Van Deman. Ruth, you're going to read us that "pome" one of our listeners sent you about the onions, are you not?

VAN DEMAN: "How dear to my heart is the loud smelling onion?" No, I'm turning that over to Mr. Rowell right now. Mike, I think this was really meant for you.

ROWELL: This is too much, Ruth.

VAN DEMAN: Oh, no. I'm still in your debt for that beautiful onion corsage.

ROWELL: Don't mention it.

VAN DEMAN: The perfume, you mean. Well, this is my day to be statistical. I brought over some of the results of our Consumer Purchases study, Wallace.

KADDERLY: Fine. I've been wondering when the figures would be coming from that.

VAN DEMAN: Some are being released every week now on family income and family expenditures. And they're revealing some very interesting things about the way we Americans spend our money.

KADDERLY: This survey covers the whole country as I remember it.

VAN DEMAN: Yes, it's a nation-wide project under W P A funds.

KADDERLY: And I understand thousands of families cooperated in answering the questions the surveyors asked.

VAN DEMAN: Between 250,000 and 300,000 families. When you start to find out about the American family on a national scale ---

KADDERLY: You have to take a good big slice in your cross section.

MISS VAN DEMAN: A random sample, as the statisticians call it. But you have to plan very carefully to be sure it's random.

KADDERLY: The Bureau of Home Economics concentrated on farm families this time didn't it?

(over)

VAN DEMAN: Farm, village, and small city. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has charge of the survey in the big cities. Our random sample covers families in 19 small cities, 140 villages, and 66 farm counties.

KADDERLY: And the 66 farm counties I suppose take in all the different kinds of farming?

VAN DEMAN: Dairying, yes -- fruit growing, cotton, tobacco, wheat farming -- all the thirteen main types of farming in the United States. And one more thing about the families before we get down to the results. This is a picture of native-born white American families, having a husband and wife. There are some special studies of negro families in the Southeast.

KADDERLY: Georgia and the Carolinas.

VAN DEMAN: And Mississippi. In all, our part of the study touches 24 States from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the Gulf to the Canadian border. Now for some of the things it's showing. Here are some interesting figures on income --

KADDERLY: For this past year?

VAN DEMAN: No. For 1935-36. None for 1937. We've been tabulating and analyzing the records this last year. All the figures were gathered in the last part of '35 or the first part of '36.

KADDERLY: That's the year the drought hit so hard in some parts of the country.

VAN DEMAN: Alas, it was. And right there, Wallace, you've put your finger on one of the things this study shows very clearly.

KADDERLY: What's that.

VAN DEMAN: That the income varies more from region to region and even from one locality to another in the same region, than it does from farm, to village, to small city.

KADDERLY: Now, elaborate on that.

VAN DEMAN: Well for example that year of the drought in the western wheat and range country.

KADDERLY: That left people pretty flat.

VAN DEMAN: Yes, the lowest median incomes we have for families who operated their own farms that year were in the States where the drought hit hardest. North Dakota, for instance. The income of wheat farmers in North Dakota that year of '35-'36 figured to a median of \$593. And livestock raisers in Colorado, and Montana, and South Dakota didn't come out much better. Their median income was around \$730.

KADDERLY: That is total family income - -

VAN DEMAN: That's right. But in contrast there were incomes of \$1493 from Illinois corn farms, and \$1475 from southern California fruit and nut farms.



KADDERLY: All these farm incomes I take it include cash and kind.

VAN DEMAN: Oh yes. They take in the food, and fuel, and housing, and other things that came from the farm without spending cash, as well as the money that comes from the sale of products.

KADDERLY: Let's have some of the village figures, Ruth.

VAN DEMAN: They had jumped around a lot too. They ran all the way from a median of about \$740 in Illinois and Iowa towns to over \$1300 in California to more than \$1500 in North Carolina.

KADDERLY: That is North Carolina white families.

VAN DEMAN: That's right. And I want to be sure too that it's clear that these figures I'm quoting are for median incomes.

KADDERLY: Median, that is if I remember my statistics right, the midpoint of all the items reported.

VAN DEMAN: Yes, about half the families had more income than this, and half had less. You know your statistics, Wallace.

KADDERLY: One has to these days.

VAN DEMAN: There seem to be a lot of things left in the world though that statistics haven't proved yet and probably never will. I have some verses about that I'm going to bring over some day when the statistics threaten to get too stiff.

KADDERLY: Fine. Mike Rowell will like to hear 'em too, I'm sure.

VAN DEMAN: But going back a moment to that non-money income of farm families.

KADDERLY: That is, the income in kind; the income that comes from the land and so on without spending cash.

VAN DEMAN: That's where a woman's work shows up.

KADDERLY: I don't doubt it.

VAN DEMAN: In raising chickens and tending to the garden. Well, just taking the food part and bringing it down to dollars and cents, again there's a striking contrast in different parts of the country.

KADDERLY: What about California and Oregon?

VAN DEMAN: Always loyal to the old home States. Well, the home-produced food -- let me see (I have the tables here) California -- Central California \$164, Southern California \$95.

KADDERLY: And Oregon?

VAN DEMAN: Oregon full-time farmers, \$356. Oregon part-time farmers, \$265.

KADDERLY: That's right. There are those two distinct types of farming there.

VAN DEMAN: That's about the same as Vermont with \$258. And Wisconsin \$288. The highest figures on home-produced food were from the South. For instance, North Carolina white farm families who own and run their own farms raised \$525 worth of food for their own use in the course of a year.

KADDERLY: Certainly quite a help to the family budget.

VAN DEMAN: Quite. And, by the way, this study shows that food is still holding first place in family spending. The traditional order was food, clothing, shelter, household operation, and so on down the line. But we're finding in this study that the automobile has crowded clothes out of second place.

KADDERLY: So now it's food, automobile, and then clothes.

VAN DEMAN: Yes, our urge to go places and see things seems to be greater than our urge to dress up. And we've found out some very interesting things about who buys the new cars and who buys the old ones. Look at this pictograph - - -

KADDERLY: Automobile purchases of United States farm families, 1935-36. Cars per 1,000 families. - - - Well, farm families seem to buy almost twice as many used cars as new streamliners, according to this.

VAN DEMAN: The old cars seem to gravitate to the farm to end their days. But you notice they're good old cars - - rather high value for used cars.

KADDERLY: Yes, I see that the average price that farmers paid for these used cars --- is listed at \$263.00.

VAN DEMAN: And the average for the new ones they bought was - - -

KADDERLY: \$739.

VAN DEMAN: Those were 1935-36 prices of course. Dr. Stanley made a very interesting comment there - - -

KADDERLY: I see it here. Let me read it:

"Farm thrift may be responsible in part for this buying pattern. However, it is probable that the American farm family is more ready to take a car that does not quite meet its dreams than to be without a car. Better to buy a second-hand car as a means of transportation, than to do without the social contacts and the aid to farm business that a family car brings." - - - Yes, I'm sure that's the way many families figure it.

VAN DEMAN: The modern trend. And true of people in villages as well as on farms, especially in the West - - - California, Oregon, Washington, Kansas, Colorado, Montana, and the Dakotas - - -

KADDERLY: Westerners aren't afraid to drive. Miles don't mean much out there.

VAN DEMAN: So I discovered last summer. I haven't quite caught my breath yet since those whizzing rides up mountains and down canyons.

KADDERLY: You enjoyed them didn't you?

VAN DEMAN: I certainly did. Well, if the results of this study weren't in actual dollars and cents, it would be hard to believe what a place the automobile has come to occupy in family expenses. We'll be having the facts about clothing and other items soon.

KADDERLY: And I hope you'll bring us the reports just as soon as they're ready for release, Ruth. This study of Consumer Purchases is of national interest.

VAN DEMAN: Well it's the first time we've ever had the facts with which to draw a nationwide picture of the American family's earning and spending.

KADDERLY: And now coming down to your home economics bulletins, as we so often do in connection with the news you bring, Ruth, haven't you people something on how to plan the family budget?

VAN DEMAN: You must be thinking about the one on "Planning and Recording Family Expenditures".

KADDERLY: That's the one. Is that available now?

VAN DEMAN: I think so. It tells how to keep household accounts on the budget system.

KADDERLY: How to set up the books on a business basis.

VAN DEMAN: And know where the money does go. As somebody paraphrased a famous poem:

"Tis not money's going hurt my days  
But that it went in unrecorded little ways".

KADDERLY: Well if anyone listening today is interested in a copy of this how-to-do-it bulletin on "Planning and Recording Family Expenditures", just drop a card to the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington, D. C. And I'm sure that Ruth Van Deman will be glad to see that you get the bulletin "Planning and Recording Family Expenditures."

